

dimensions of this depression; on the other hand there was a desire to state the facts fully, and perhaps to over-emphasize them. There was on the one side a demand that Parliament should take action to afford relief, and on the other side there was a tendency to throw back on the municipalities and the Provincial Governments the sole responsibility of providing whatever unemployment relief was necessary. Such, briefly and very casually, was the position.

There followed on that unusual condition an unusual election. As a result of the controversy that had been carried on for many months while the session lasted, the Government of the day at last said to the Opposition: "We do not agree with your contentions or your proposed methods; we believe that we are right and that you are wrong; but let us go to the country and have the people decide, and then we shall have an authoritative Government, fresh from the people, administering the affairs of the country and endeavouring to provide methods of relief and betterment." The Government of the day had entirely within its own hands the privilege of deciding upon the time of the election. It had all the circumstances of the case fully in view. It knew that the Imperial Conference was to take place in a certain month of the year 1930, and with that in mind it made every possible effort—and in this respect it was successful—to have the election over in time to give the delegates from Canada a reasonable opportunity to consider the situation and to consult with one another in preparation for the Imperial Conference. Then the election was called, and took place.

I have said that this was an unusual election. It was unusual in this respect, that never in the history of Canada, and perhaps never in the history of any country, had there been an election campaign in which the information supplied by the contending parties was more widely distributed and more effectively stereotyped. I use that word designedly. It was no longer possible for either of the opposing parties in their public canvass to put forward one programme in one section of the country and another programme in another section. Radio broadcasting was utilized. Statements made at a central point were broadcast to millions of hearers all over the country and published in the press in every quarter of the Dominion. So when the Prime Minister made his statement at Brantford, or when the leader of the Opposition made his statement at Winnipeg, it was made not simply for the people of one city and its vicinity, but for the people of the whole country. It was stereotyped and

Right Hon. Sir GEORGE FOSTER.

ineradicable, and could not be gotten away from, and consequently could not be varied according to exigencies of climate or geography. I think that never before were the electorate of the Dominion of Canada more carefully or more thoroughly indoctrinated in the policies and proposals of the two opposing parties than in the election in July. I am glad that it was so. I feel that a very great gain has been made in the public life of Canada. No longer can the leader of a party evade responsibility for his statements: they are heard or read in all portions of the Dominion of Canada. There can no longer be any shuffling or variation of policies except in secret conclave. At last we have eliminated the primary difficulty that used to exist, namely, that the policies, proposals and methods of the contending parties were not thoroughly known in the whole constituency of Canada. In this respect the last election was unusual.

The election was unusual, too, in its result. Was the leader of the Opposition himself, or the leader of the Government, surprised at the result? If their inmost sentiments could be ascertained, it would be found, I doubt not, that both leaders were surprised that the result was exactly as it was. It was a satisfactory result in this respect, that after the fullest of canvasses the sentiment of the people was expressed in no uncertain terms. The leader of the Opposition said to the electorate of Canada: "Honour me with your confidence, put me and my party into power, and we will do thus and so. Signed, R. B. Bennett, for the Liberal-Conservative Party." And on the 28th of July the electorate of Canada marched to the polls and signed the contract, giving the present Government a majority of some thirty-eight over all other groups and parties. There is the contract, the promise made and signed by the Liberal-Conservative Party and attested to by the electors of this country, after a contest conducted on a common basis and by common electoral methods with a party under the direction of the late leader of the Government; that is, with the Government party itself.

Then comes the corollary of that—an unusual and unprecedented session of Parliament; the session in which we are now engaged. The promises made and the policies advanced by the party now in power were plain and legible, and thoroughly understood from one end of the Dominion to the other by the total electorate. One of those promises was that a special session of Parliament should